Some Observations of Vipers.

A curious *Italian*, called *Francesco Redi*, having lately had an opportunity, by the great number of Vipers, brought to the *Grand Luke* of *Tuscany* for the composing of *Theriac* or *Treacle*, to examine what is vulgarly delivered and believed concerning the Poyson of those Creatures, hath, (according to the account, given of it in the French *Journal des Scavans*, printed *January* 4. 166$\frac{5}{6}$) performed his undertaking with much exactness, and publish'd in an Italian tract, not yet come into *England*, these Observations.

1. He hath observed, that the poyson of Vipers is neither in their *Teeth*, nor in their *Tayle*, nor in their *Galls*; but in the two *Vesicles* or *Bladders*, which cover their teeth, and which coming to be compressed, when the Vipers bite, do emit a certain yellowish Liquor, that runs along the teeth and poysons the wound. Whereof he gives this proof, that he hath rub'd the wounds of many Animals with the *Gall* of Vipers, and pricked them with their *Teeth*, and yet no considerable ill accident follow'd upon it, but that as often as he rubbed the wounds with the said yellow Liquor, not one of them escaped.

2 Whereas commonly it hath hitherto been believed, that the poyson of Vipers being swallowed, was present death; this *Author*, after many reiterated Experiments, is said to have observed, that in Vipers there is neither Humour, nor Excrement, nor any part, not the *Gall* it self, that, being taken into the Body, kills. And he assures, that he hath seen men eat, and hath often made Bruit Animals swallow all that is esteem'd most poysonous in a Viper, yet without the least mischief to them. Whence he shews, that it needs not so much to be wondred at, that certain *Empiricks* swallow the juyce of the most

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moſt venomous Animals without receiving any harm thereby; adding, that, which is adſcribed to the vertue of their *Antidote*, ought to be attributed to the nature of thoſe kinds of Poyſons, which are no poyſons, when they are ſwallow'd, (for which Doctrine he alſo alledges *Celſus*) but onely when they are put into wounds. Which alſo has been noted by *Lucan*, who introduces *Cato* thus ſpeaking;

Noxia ſerpentum eſt admiſto ſanguine peſtis,
Morſu virus habent, & fatum dente minantur;
Pocula *morte carent.*

And what alſo ſome Authors have affirm'd, *videl.* That it is mortal, to eat of the Fleſh of creatures killed by Vipers; or to drink of the VVine wherein Vipers have been drowned; or to ſuck the wounds that have been made by them, is by this Authour obſerved to be wide of truth. For he aſſures, that many perſons have eaten Pullets and Pigeons, bitten by Vipers, without finding any alteration from it in their health. On the contrary, he declares, That it is a ſoveraign Remedy againſt the biting of Vipers, to ſuck the wound; alledging an Experiment, made upon a Dog, which he cauſed to be bitten by a Viper at the noſe, who by licking his own wound ſaved his life. Which he confirms by the example of thoſe people, celebrated in *Hiſtory* by the name of *Marſi* and *Pſilli*, whoſe Employment it was, to heal thoſe, that had been bitten by Serpents, by ſucking their wounds.

3. He adds, that although *Galen* and many modern *Phyſitians* do affirm, that there is nothing, which cauſeth ſo much thirſt, as Vipers-fleſh, yet he hath experimented the contrary and known divers perſons, who did eat the fleſh of Vipers at all their meals, and yet did aſſure him, they never were leſs dry, then when they obſerved that kind of Diet.

4 As for the Salt of Vipers, whereof ſome *Chymiſts* have ſo

ſo great eſteem, he ſaith, that it hath no *Purging* vertue at all in it; adding that even of *All Salts*, none hath more vertue than another, as he pretends to have ſhew'd in an other *Book* of his, *De natura ſalium*; which alſo hath not been yet tranſmitted into theſe parts.

5. He denies, what *Ariſtotle* aſſures, and what *Galen* ſaith to have often tryed, that the *Spittle* of a *Faſting* perſon kills Vipers, and he laughs at many other particulars, that have been delivered concerning the *Antipathy* of Vipers unto certain things; and their manner of Conception and Generation, and ſeveral other properties, commonly aſcribed to them; which the alledged French Author affirms to be refuted by ſo many experiments made by this *Italian* Philoſopher, that it ſeems to him, there is no place left for doubting, after ſo authentick a teſtimony.

Advertiſement.

THe *Reader* of theſe *Tranſactions* is deſired to correct theſe *Errata* in *Number* 8. *viz.* page. 132. line. penult. read *Wine* for *Lime*; and page 133. line 10. read *Threſher* for *Treſpher*, as ſome *Copies* have it; and page 136. line ult. read *purifie* for *putrifie*.

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